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ABSTRACT

This brochure is directed at individuals interested in building business and community partnerships with education. It details how and why to establish partnerships in classrooms, school districts, communities, and the policy arena. It begins with brief discussions of the following: reasons for encouraging higher standards in education; the need for a strategic plan for education; roles for small and large organizations in partnerships; and evolution of partnerships over time based on changing needs and resources. The benefits of education partnerships to the following partners are listed: students; families; schools; business; and community. The following steps in building business and community partnerships are considered: identify issues to address and reform goals; define the purpose and scope of partnerships; identify available resources; connect partnership resources to improvement; measure progress and results; and share success stories. A five-page table explains what partners can do to focus funds, human and material resources, and advocacy efforts on 15 improvements (including enriching the curriculum; motivating students; leading for change; supporting school-based restructuring; building consensus for reform; and ensuring adequate educational opportunities). A list of helpful publications and the address of the U.S. Department of Education's online library conclude the brochure. (MN)

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Building Business & Community Partnerships for Learning

Schools cannot do it alone. But together, we can improve American education--school by school and community by community. Together we can move every child toward achieving high levels of learning.

Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

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Building Business and Community Partnerships for Learning

Many state and local leaders are examining ways to improve student achievement and help students set higher expectations and standards for themselves. In 1994, Congress passed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act to help initiate and expand local and state efforts to raise standards of achievement and discipline.

Why encourage higher standards?

- Students who work harder and achieve more get on the right course to make the most of their lives.

- Each year an increasing number of the best jobs are requiring more skills. Most students will need a solid foundation in elementary and secondary schools to be prepared for 1-4 years of college, work-study experience, and productive employment.

- The shift to an "information and technology economy" requires a commitment to learning for a lifetime and the development of flexible and transferrable skills. The effort to improve educational opportunities for all students and prepare them for the challenges in the coming century requires the best from all of us. Schools, businesses, universities, and social and cultural organizations are working to meet this challenge by creating partnerships.

In order to effectively engage potential partners in all aspects of education, the community needs a road map or strategic plan that clearly defines goals, shows how all the pieces can fit together to reach these goals, and monitors progress and results. Working together, business and community members, parents, and educators can identify existing resources and, more importantly, recognize gaps at different levels within the system that need to be addressed. School improvement needs to be reinforced by all parts of the system.

Both small and large organizations can help improve student learning by acting on their own and with others. Partnerships occur at many different levels. They can happen between one business and one classroom; they can be a collaboration of businesses, parents or organizations working together to maximize impact on student learning; or they can involve an entire community coming together to achieve the National Education Goals or their own goals.

Partnerships can evolve over time based on changing needs and resources. Successful partnerships are characterized by an exchange of ideas and resources among all of the partners and by a willingness to direct activities toward achieving the desired goals. What ever form they take, when partnerships know what they want to accomplish and have a way to measure their results, they can make a real difference in helping to improve teaching and learning so that more students can be prepared for college, for careers, and for productive citizenship.

Education partnerships bring all stakeholders to the table and can be beneficial to all partners.

Students

- ★ Course work is more challenging, exciting, and relevant to the real world
- ★ Higher expectations and standards for learning
- ★ Improved basic skills, discipline, and computer and advanced skills

Families

- ★ Enhanced opportunities for family involvement in children's learning
- ★ Opportunities for lifetime learning
- ★ Involvement in setting school goals and direction

Schools

- ★ Additional resources and technical assistance
- ★ Enhanced opportunities for on-going and better teacher training
- ★ Increased public confidence and support for education

Business

- ★ Highly skilled and globally competitive workforce for a strong and vigorous economy
- ★ Opportunity to develop higher academic and skill standards
- ★ Positive consumer response to "socially responsible" companies

Community

- ★ Opportunity to convene all the stakeholders
- ★ Enhanced economic development and quality of life
- ★ Renewed community spirit and citizen participation

How to Build Business and Community Partnerships for Learning

✏ IDENTIFY ISSUES TO ADDRESS AND REFORM GOALS

What are our school goals and mission?
What changes do we need to make?

✏ DEFINE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PARTNERSHIPS

What do we hope to accomplish and how do we plan to work together?
What changes do we plan to make?
Where in the education system should we direct the partnership--classroom school, district, community, policy arena? Or some combination thereof?

✏ IDENTIFY AVAILABLE RESOURCES

What kinds of resources will help us meet our goals--money, materials and equipment, volunteers, advisors and consultants, or advocates?
Where can we locate the resources we need?
How will we approach companies, foundations, and community organizations?
How will these resources be managed?

✏ CONNECT PARTNERSHIP RESOURCES TO IMPROVEMENT

How will our partnership improve the quality of learning and teaching?
How will the partnership make a difference for students learning to higher standards?
What kinds of activities or involvement are needed to reach our goals?
Will our partnership better connect parents and teachers to help students achieve more?

✏ MEASURE PROGRESS AND RESULTS

How will we know if we're making progress toward our goals?
What evidence will we use to measure results?
What benchmarks will we establish to know we are on track?

✏ SHARE SUCCESS STORIES

How will we communicate results to other partners and the public?
How will we recognize and express appreciation to our partners?
How will we share our success stories with others?

Successful business and community partnerships for learning concentrate on helping schools create safe, disciplined learning environments with higher levels of student achievement. By linking much-needed resources with school and district needs, partnerships can become powerful catalysts for improving education.

Building Business and Community Partnerships for Learning ...In the Classroom

Focus of Improvement	What Can Partners Do?		
	Funds	Human and Material Resources	Advocacy
CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT	Support curriculum improvement projects that focus on core subjects Provide challenge grants to help redesign schools for use of technology Link schools and classrooms with hands-on learning opportunities in the community and businesses	Train teachers and students on computers and use of technology Speak to classes on applications of subject-area skills in the "real world" Provide equipment and supplementary classroom materials or ideas Combine school-based learning with a work-based experience	Support efforts to connect parents and teachers Establish challenging student learning standards Advocate high standards of teaching and learning Advise on reallocation of funds to support improvements in curriculum and instruction
ENHANCING TEACHER EFFICACY	Support teacher summer institutes and/or graduate courses in subject areas Fund teacher visits to model schools Provide mini-grants to promote teacher innovation Support teacher networks and forums	Invite teachers into organization for industry- based experiences Be an additional resource/mentor for teachers Provide equipment and supplies for teachers (telephones, voice mail, computers, paper, etc.) Provide ongoing support for staff development Provide teacher centers	Support teachers seeking National Board Certification Advocate strengthening of teacher education programs in colleges and universities Advocate more time for teachers to engage in quality professional development
MOTIVATING STUDENTS FOR LEARNING	Fund and develop after-school programs in core subject areas Provide scholarships and recognition for academic success Provide work-based experience tied to academics	Mentor students in career possibilities and future opportunities Tutor students in core subject areas to reach high achievement standards Provide classroom tools such as computers, networking technology, multimedia resources, and calculators Help schools establish home use of computers linked to schools	Support financial aid for college Advocate funding for early childhood programs Support student learning standards Advocate funding for smaller class size and school reform

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...In the School

Focus of Improvement	What Can Partners Do?		
	Funds	Human and Material Resources	Advocacy
SCHOOL MISSION	Host retreats to define school mission and goals for student learning	Facilitate regularly scheduled workshops for parents, educators and community Provide consultants, books, videos, and other resources Participate in school restructuring/ improvement	Clarify business expectations and skills for future employees Support establishment of school mission/vision Promote high standards of learning and achievement
LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE	Sponsor summer institutes and leadership development programs Support follow-up workshops, activities, and networks	Work with staff in defining mission and goals, developing strategic and implementation plans Provide consultants and advisors to administrators and teachers Provide mentoring and shadowing	Support school leaders at school and at school board meetings Advocate accountability of school leaders for high student achievement Support funding for leadership identification and development for principals and parent leader
MANAGING CHANGE	Sponsor management training workshops for teachers and administrators Provide implementation and incentive grants for school-based management reforms Fund site visits for teachers and administrators to reforming schools	Provide on-site consultants and advisors to help faculty, staff, and administrators develop new management styles Facilitate development of self-evaluation tools to assess progress Help involve and inform parents and the community of reform goals, strategies and student learning Use satellite networks/technology to disseminate information to other school leaders	Support establishment of leadership and management training for school leaders Advocate school-based decision making Advocate school-based control of funding and budget

...In the District

Focus of Improvement	What Can Partners Do?		
	Funds	Human and Material Resources	Advocacy
SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL-BASED RESTRUCTURING	Host board retreats to develop district improvement plan Help establish focused staff development program	Provide consultants to work with district and school leaders Serve on superintendent's reform advisory boards as well as school councils Help organize the district's and school's financial records to clearly identify the costs of education by function, grade level, programs, and schools	Support funding for leadership development and team building for district staff, school board, and parent community leaders Support school board policies designed to institutionalize improvement
STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY	Support comparative studies and visits with other districts Help establish continuous improvement processes to assess student performance against high achievement standards	Consult, advise, and help set up data collection and analysis systems to track student success on the job and in college Help district analyze individual school needs in implementing reforms	Advocate school, district, and school board accountability linked with financial and technical support
SETTING UP COMMUNICATION AND RESOURCE NETWORKS	Survey businesses, colleges, faculty, staff, students, and parents about needs and successess Help establish district wide resource networks	Help develop communication plans within districts, between and within schools and families, and with the general public Provide necessary equipment and technical support for various communication strategies -- telephones, copy machines, faxes, modems, e-mail, Internet Run for or support good candidates for your local school board or committee	Encourage broad communication with public in setting goals and strategies for school improvement

Note: The items listed in this chart are not meant to be inclusive, but rather a starting point for the unique needs, resources, and goals of each community.

...In the Community

Focus of Improvement	What Can Partners Do?		
	Funds	Human and Material Resources	Advocacy
BUILDING A CONSENSUS FOR REFORM	Sponsor forums and town meetings to discuss education issues Run ad campaigns for better schools Sponsor special educational supplements in newspapers to tell people how they can be involved	Canvass community to identify educational needs and priorities Establish community wide coalitions for education Identify and develop parent, community, and educational leaders	Recruit other community leaders to participate in school partnerships Advocate funding for needed school improvements and changes
CONNECTING FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS	Host functions to create bonds between schools and families Support programs which encourage families to become involved in education	Advise employee-parents on ways to support learning Help create family resource centers Help schools develop creative ways to communicate and collaborate with families	Advocate family-centered policies -- flex time and time off to volunteer in schools Promote family involvement in education
LINKING THE COMMUNITY RESOURCES	Support programs to train parents as child's first teacher Provide incentive and recognition grants to encourage agency cooperation Support community-based centers for child care, teenagers, adult literacy, cultural and arts development	Help develop volunteer and community service programs for students Serve as mentors for students who need extra help (drug, gang violence prevention, etc.) Institute preschool and day care centers at or near school sites	Promote close ties between community resources and schools to help children and families Lobby for funding for early childhood, school reform, and after-school programs

...In the Policy Arena

Focus of Improvement	What Can Partners Do?		
	Funds	Human and Material Resources	Advocacy
FOCUSING ON IMPROVED STUDENT PERFORMANCE	Provide incentive grants for implementing school improvement plans Reward schools making the most progress	Help schools and districts develop implementation plans that focus on better achievement Link partnership programs to results-oriented reform strategies to increase success in college and/or on the job	Support accompanying legislation and state funding for reform Advocate for higher standards for all students
REASSESSING RULES AND REGULATIONS	Fund research on effective implementation of reform	Help school councils identify regulations that hinder change and "run interference" for them at district and state levels	Lobby for legislative changes to shift from regulation focus to school-based efforts and better achievement
ENSURING ADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	Fund an assessment of needs to upgrade teaching Provide matching funds for repairs or upgrade facilities for using technology Help schools meet matching fund requirements for state technology Provide funds to link after-school programs in the community	Volunteer time to rewire, repair, and rebuild classrooms and schools Manage volunteer and mentoring programs Help communicate need to link community and school resources for children Provide educational technology and distance learning capability	Advocate and lobby for tax levies earmarked for improvements, reform, and better teacher training Support incentives to offer after-school and summer programs linked to enrichment Lobby legislature for technology allocations

This material was adapted from *Sustaining Change in Schools: A Role for Business.* (New York: Council for Aid to Education, 1994).

"America Goes Back to School: Get Involved!" and Other U.S Department of Education Resources

The U.S. Department of Education offers a number of publications and events that can help you build business and community partnership for learning. You can receive free publications by calling the Department at **1-800-USA-LEARN.**

"America Goes Back to School: Get Involved!" is [illegible]at's filled with ideas for improving education that have worked in many communities around the na[illegible]. It offers guidance that helps businesses and communities to achieve these seven key education goals: making schools safe, disciplined and drug-free; encouraging greater parent and family involvement; helping America to become a reading, literate society; achieving high standards and real accountability; making technology available so all children can succeed in the 21st century; preparing young people for careers and developing strong school-to-work transitions; and making college more accessible.

"Building Business and Community Partnerships for Learning: Change in Action" is a compilation of partnership stories from around the country. Included is a bibliography of additional resources.

Each month **Richard Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education,** hosts a **Satellite Town Meeting**, a live, interactive video teleconference featuring best practices as shared by community leaders, educators, and national experts to achieve the National Education Goals. Videos from past shows are available on loan.

The **Community Update Newsletter** is a monthly newsletter for parents, educators, and citizens involved in school reform and efforts to reach the National Education Goals.

Other helpful publications are also available, including:

- *Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning*
- *Employers, Families and Education: Promoting Family Involvement in Learning*
- *An Invitation to Your Community: Building Community Partnerships for Learning*
- *Read*Write*Now Kits*
- *Get Involved! How Parents and Families Can Help Their Children Do Better in School*
- *Team Up for Kids! How Schools Can Support Family Involvement in Education*
- *Be Family Friendly: It's Good Business!*
- *Join Together for Kids! How Communities Can Support Family Involvement in Education*

Other resources & videos for loan are also available.

Call **1-800-USA-LEARN** or log on to the U.S. Department of Education's Online Library (gopher.ed.gov or http://www.ed.gov) for answers to your questions, copies of publications, vide[illegible]oan, or on-line information.

"Better Education is Everybody's Business"
Richard W. Riley, *U.S. Secretary of Edu[illegible]*

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